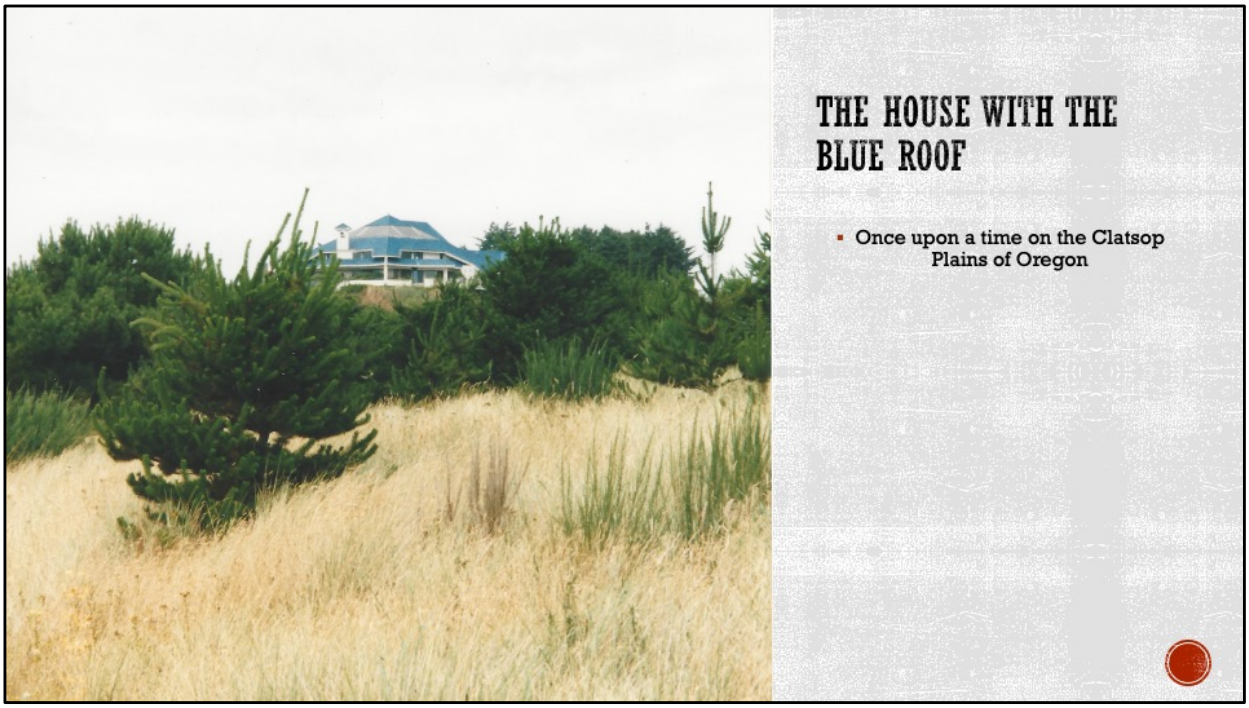
Part One

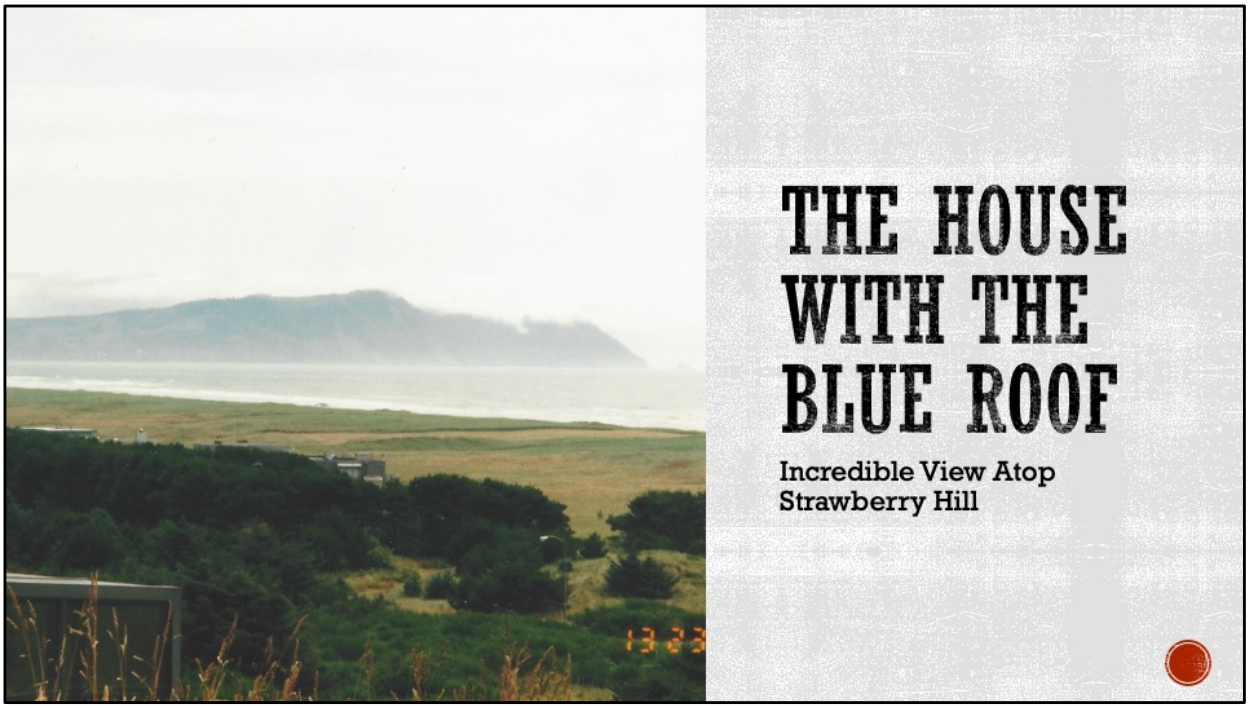
Early Surf Pines and Surrounding Area



Good evening. Once upon a time, there was a car salesman named Merritt Bloxom, who lived in the central Washington town of Yakima. This is in the middle of apple country and many of his customers were apple producers.

They complained about the fact that a large majority of their shipped apples would become damaged and bruised. This was because the apples were packed loosely in boxes and got bounced around significantly in transit. As a result, a large percentage of their shipments would become unusable.

One-night Merritt woke up and had a great idea. He produced a cardboard insert that separated the apples in the Apple boxes. This had never been done before and his design was truly unique. It had pockets for each Apple so that you'd have one layer of cardboard, a layer of apples, another layer of cardboard and stack it until you'd filled the box up.



He patented the idea and ended up becoming quite wealthy from this invention. He also was a great fan of the Oregon coast and used to come to the coast often. In March 1981 he and his wife Jan bought an acre lot at the top of Strawberry Hill. Strawberry Hill at the north end of Surf Pines is the tallest point on the western dunes of the Clatsop Plains. It is about 135 feet in height and was only a couple hundred feet from Sunset Beach.

The new house was designed by architect Ed Weber of Yakima Wash. Weber took into consideration the wind factor and angled the house so the two main outside decks could be put to their best use. Generally, one or the other is protected from the wind. However, **he was from Yakima**.

Construction of the house started in 1983. The general contractor was Loren Barger from Yakima Wash. The fact that both were from Yakima had some interesting impacts on this house 17 years later, when the house suffered water damage.

As you all know we do have different weather on here the NW coast.

Jan and Merritt contracted a well-known landscape architect, Hoichi Kurisu, to design and do the Japanese landscaping, fishpond and the two waterfalls. The rocks used in the landscaping were quarried from the Youngs River falls area. The original roof on the house was blue tile imported from Japan and weighed over 35,000 lbs. This house could be seen from HWY 101 and was named the House with the Blue roof.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF

"Living Room with bar."

The original house did not have a guest room, even though the house had over 5.100 sq. feet at the time. The third floor was a hot tub room whose floor slowly revolved (still does) in a full circle.

The 2nd floor is the master bedroom suite. Lastly, the 1st floor had the kitchen and great room and to the right of the front door a bath and bedroom. However, The Bloxom's primary home was in Yakima and Merritt used that bedroom as his home office whenever they were here. All floors were connected to a central glassed elevator. The area above the garage, now a family room, was Merritt's storage room for the 200+ kites he had collected from around the world.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE STARTED IN 1983

- "Jan and Merrill obviously enjoyed mirrors"

Jan and Merritt obviously enjoyed mirrors; old pictures show many more than it has now. The grapevine has it that Jan and Merrill decided to sell the property for health reasons. There were other rumors about family discord and that may have started the infamous Curse of the house with the blue roof.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF
▪ "They enlarge the decks, added the huge fire pit area and a jacuzzi room with his and her bathrooms."

The next owners purchase the property in January of 1988. They too must've loved living here. Their additions show it. They enlarge the decks, added the huge fire pit area and a jacuzzi room with his and her bathrooms.

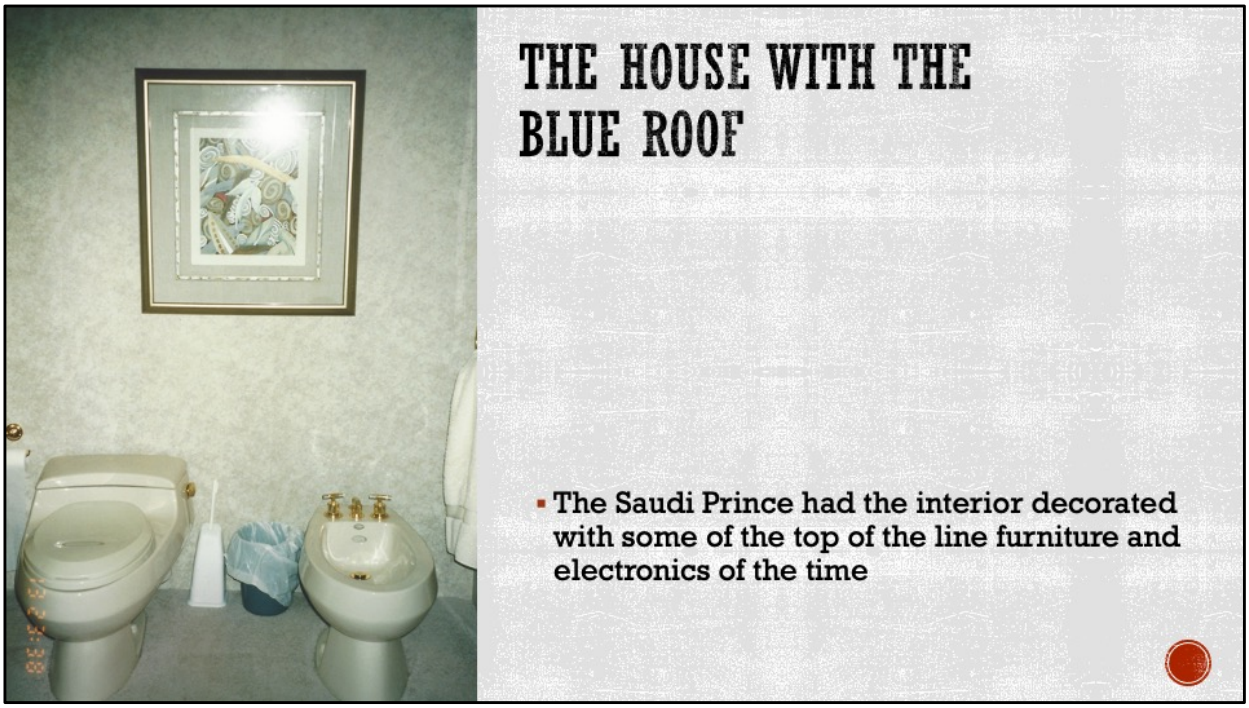
At the time, the jacuzzi upstairs was a large sunken step down into unit, they removed the hot tub, wet bar and closed in part of the third floor. Then added a full bath with a nice marble floor in the shower where the hot tub had been. They put in a round bed that sat in the center of the room, so it rotated. They enlarged the area above the garage, finished and divided it into two small bedrooms for the children and the rest would be a family playroom. They also had a full bath put in for the children. All these changes increased the size of the house to its current size over 6,600 square feet.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF

- "How Could a manager of a canning plant could afford this house?"

Many people were quite curious how this manager of a canning plant could afford this house and all the additions and changes.

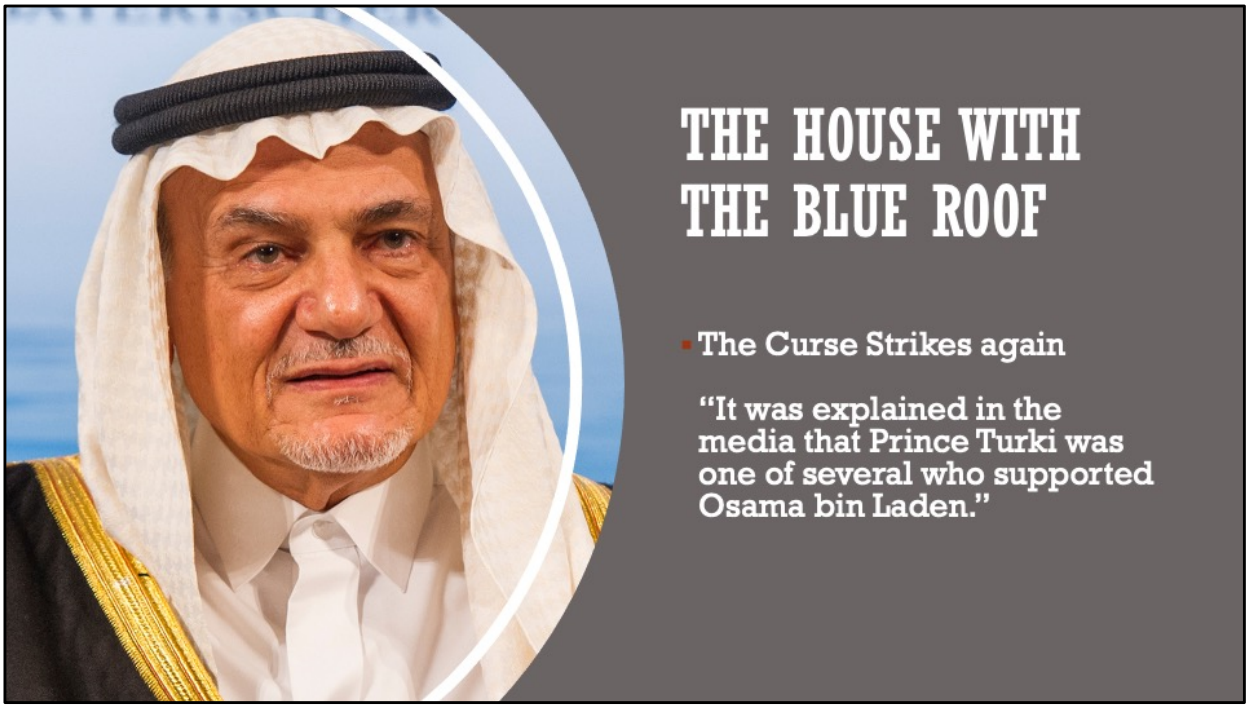
Well eventually everyone found out. It appears that he had a side business selling drugs. What was worse is that he funded this business with monies from the retirement accounts from his company. In short time his family fell apart and we understand he had free lodging at the State prison.


THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF
The Saudi Prince had the interior decorated with some of the top of the line furniture and electronics of the time

Subsequently, the home was left vacant and it wasn't until a few years later that a company based out of Saudi Arabia purchased the home. They proceeded to hire a designer from Texas to do a complete interior decoration with top of the line furniture and electronics.

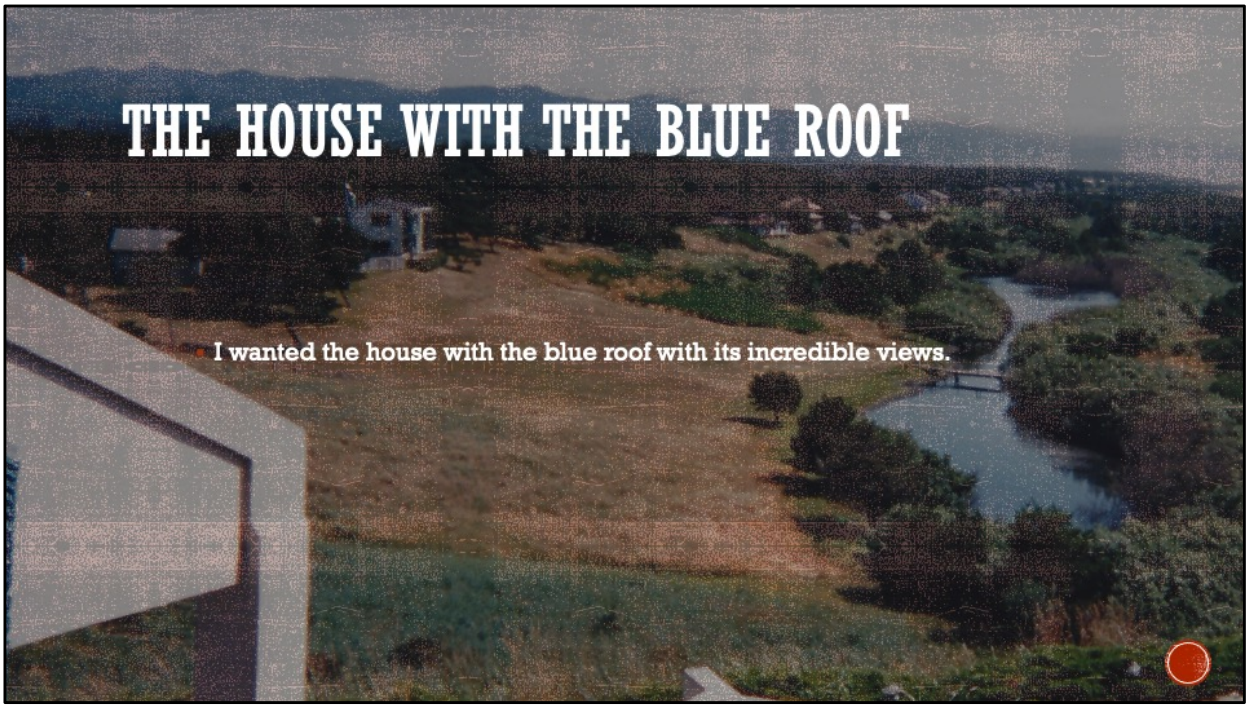
Then late that fall several of the neighbors close to the house with the blue roof were contacted about buying their homes. It was later found that the new owner of the house wanted a place to keep his extended family when he visited. None of the local neighbors took him up on his offer.

Later in December the new owner decided to visit his new house on the Oregon coast and brought his stable of horses to ride on the beach. Since he was unable to purchase the homes surrounding the house with the blue roof, he rented an entire floor of the Seaside Shilo hotel for his entourage of wives and kids.


THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF
The Curse Strikes again
"It was explained in the media that Prince Turki was one of several who supported Osama bin Laden."

The new owner now has been identified as prince Turki bin Faisel Al Suid the head of Saudi General Intelligence Directorate. Unfortunately, his visit was not much fun for him. After a disastrous ride on the beach during one of our infamous winter storms he stormed off with his group and went home to never return

Now here is where the curse of the house with the blue roof affected Prince Turki. 10 days before the attack on 9/11 the prince was replaced after 23 years in this position. It was explained in the media that Prince Turki was one of several who supported Osama bin Laden and was ostracized by the Saudi family as a result.



After several years of neglect and ensuing water damage the house with the blue roof was not doing well. Many of the local agents tried to convince the Saudi owners to try and sell the house. Finally, in 1998 they agreed to put the House on the market.

Now here is where I got involved with the house with the blue roof. It was July 4, 1998 and I did not win the lotto.

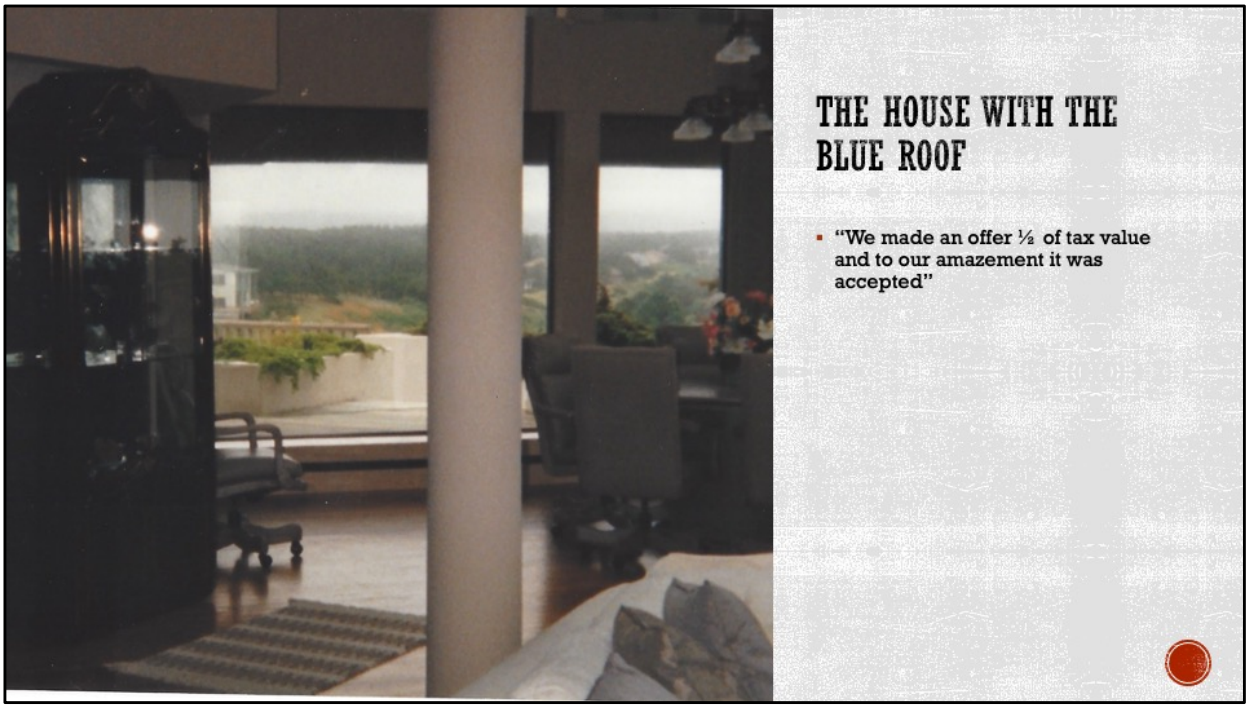
There's a very good reason why I wanted to win the lottery. I really wanted the house with the blue roof with its incredible views. Unfortunately, I did not prevail.

In fact, the only lottery I have ever won in my life was number 35 on the all-time draft list for Vietnam. I was bummed. I've always been fascinated with that house since my wife first moved here in 1992.

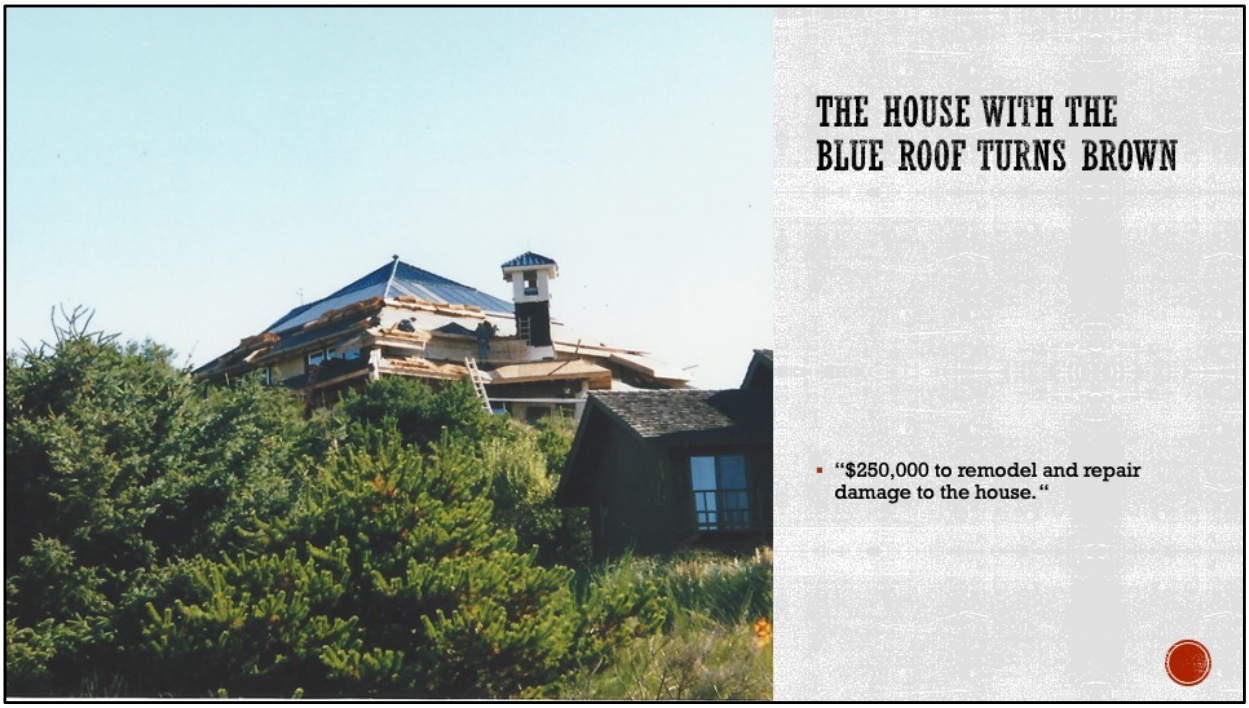
That night I tossed and turned trying to figure out a way I could buy this house. Finally, around four in the morning I figured it out.

One of the reasons we moved back to the coast is we had recently sold our company in Seattle and we had a little cash available. However, I knew there was extensive water damage and I have absolutely no building skills with my five left thumbs.

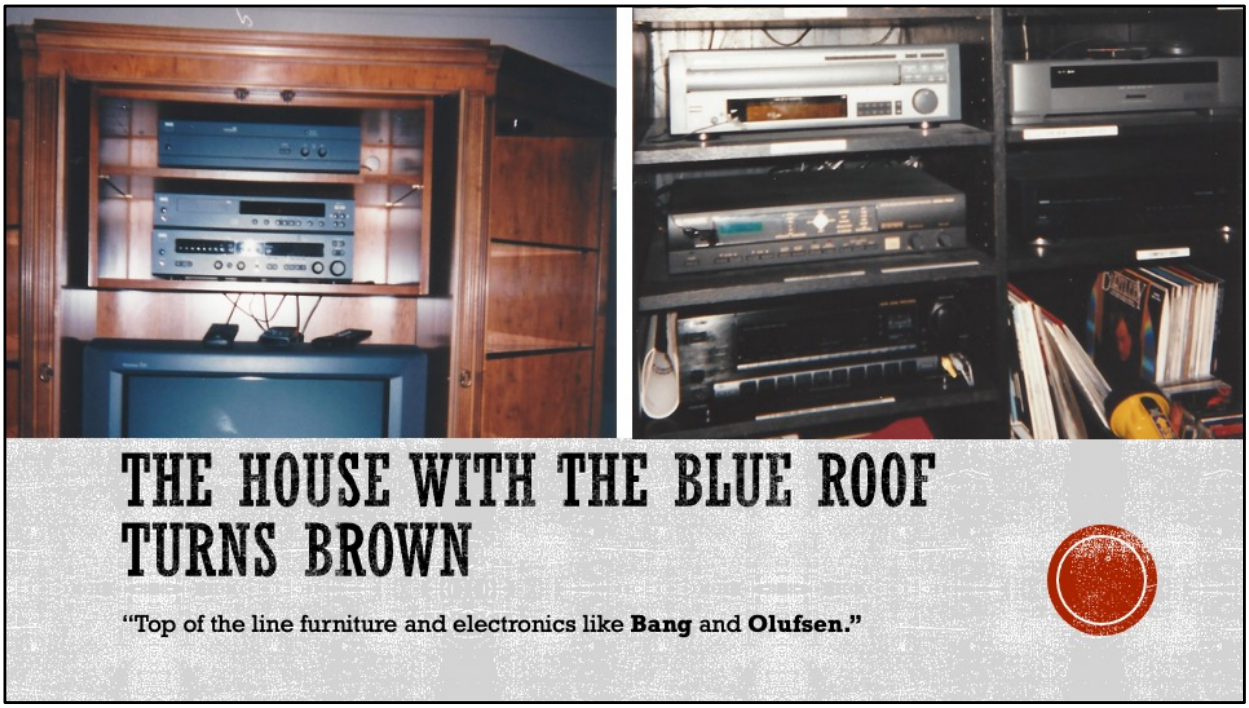
I also did not know how much money it would cost to make these repairs after buying the house. My plan was to get together with my contractor friend, who built my house here in Surf Pines, to see if we could partner in acquiring the house with the blue roof.



He loved the idea and we proceeded to make an incredibly lowball bid on the house. That year the tax value of the home was a bit over $1.4 million. We offered $750,000 or about half of the tax value, not figuring we would get any response at all. To our amazement a few days later they accepted our offer with a $5000 earnest money.



Then we had to scramble. The good news was that I had befriended the branch manager of Western Bank, which is now the Bank of the Pacific on 11th. He helped us obtain a $1 million HELOC based on the tax value of the house with the blue roof. This allowed us to purchase the house with $250,000 to remodel and repair damage to the house.



The purchase of the home included all the furniture and appliances. Well we obviously had to clean out all the contents before we could start our repair and remodel.

So, like any other red blooded American we decide to have an estate sale. The problem was that we were talking about top of the line furniture and electronics like **Bang** and **Olufsen.**

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN

- "We found some very cool ladies that specialized in estate sales."

So, we found some very cool ladies that specialized in estate sales. I told them I would handle the marketing and advertisements, but I needed their help in pricing and helping the day of the sale. As a result, we found some very interesting things.

First the values of the furnishings were first cabin.

The second thing we found is why Prince Turki and his guys wanted the women and kids kept away at the Shilo.

We found one of the best stocked bars I have ever seen (I still have some exotic liqueurs from that bar).

We also found that their Satellite system had a huge collection of x rated porno channels.

Even their dining room table flipped into an eight-person poker table with executive chairs that we found were worth $2,500 each.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN

- "On the same weekend the huge antique car shows occur in Long Beach and Seaside, we scheduled our sale on a Saturday."

So, on the same Saturday the annual antique car shows occur in Long Beach and Seaside, we scheduled our sale.

One thing we were concerned about was the house with the blue roof had such notoriety we were afraid that we would be inundated with non-buying lookie loos.

As a result, we decided to charge a five-dollar entry fee, which we planned to donate to Clatsop Animal Assistance and the local Habitat for Humanity.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN
"We charged a $5 entry fee to enter our estate sale and donated over $2,500 to Habitat for Humanity and Clatsop Animal Assistance."

The sale was a complete success. We raised over $2500 in entry fees that we donated to CAA and Habitat.

I remember one person saying that she had not heard about the sale till she saw the signs on Highway 101.

Several people nearby said, “didn’t you hear the radio ads."

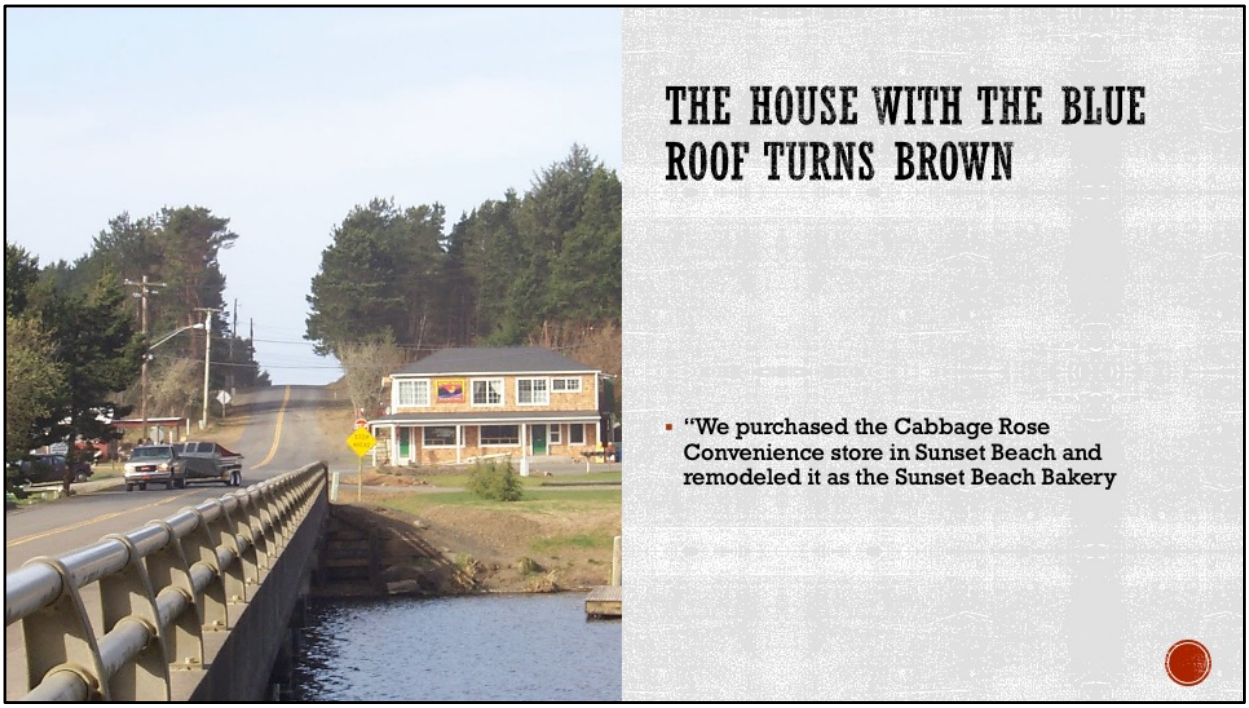
THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN

- "Roof replacement"

We ended up making over $30,000 on that estate sale (the best I have ever done for sure).

After the sale we started the remodel and repair. We had thought the damage had been because of the tile roof so we decided to remove it and put a regular shingle roof up instead.

We found that was not necessary and now the house with the blue roof is now a house with a brown roof. It turned out most of the water damage occurred because the architect and contractor from Yakima had used Dravite stucco and single pane aluminum windows. All recommended and installed by the Yakima Gang.


THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN
"We purchased the Cabbage Rose Convenience store in Sunset Beach and remodeled it as the Sunset Beach Bakery

About the same time Annie and I purchased the Cabbage Rose Convenience store in Sunset Beach and remodeled it as the Sunset Beach Bakery.

My partner and I had agreed that if we were not able to sell the house within 6 months of the repair completion, one of us could buy out the other.

Well my interests had changed, and I wanted to buy an expensive baking oven. So he bought me out and we got our new oven.

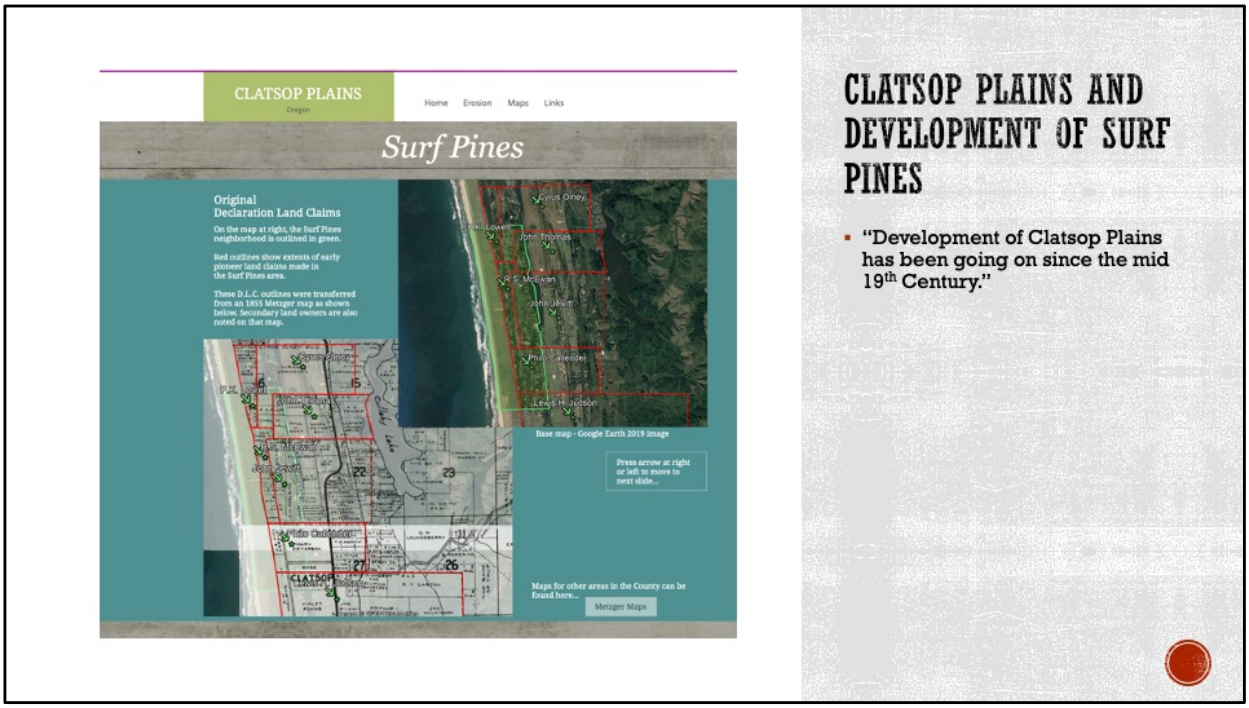
A few years later after we had sold the bakery and had moved over to Spokane, we heard that my partner was hit by the curse and had left the area. So, the house sat empty for another few years.

THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE ROOF TURNS BROWN

- "We wanted to buy a new expensive oven for our bakery, so my partner bought us out."

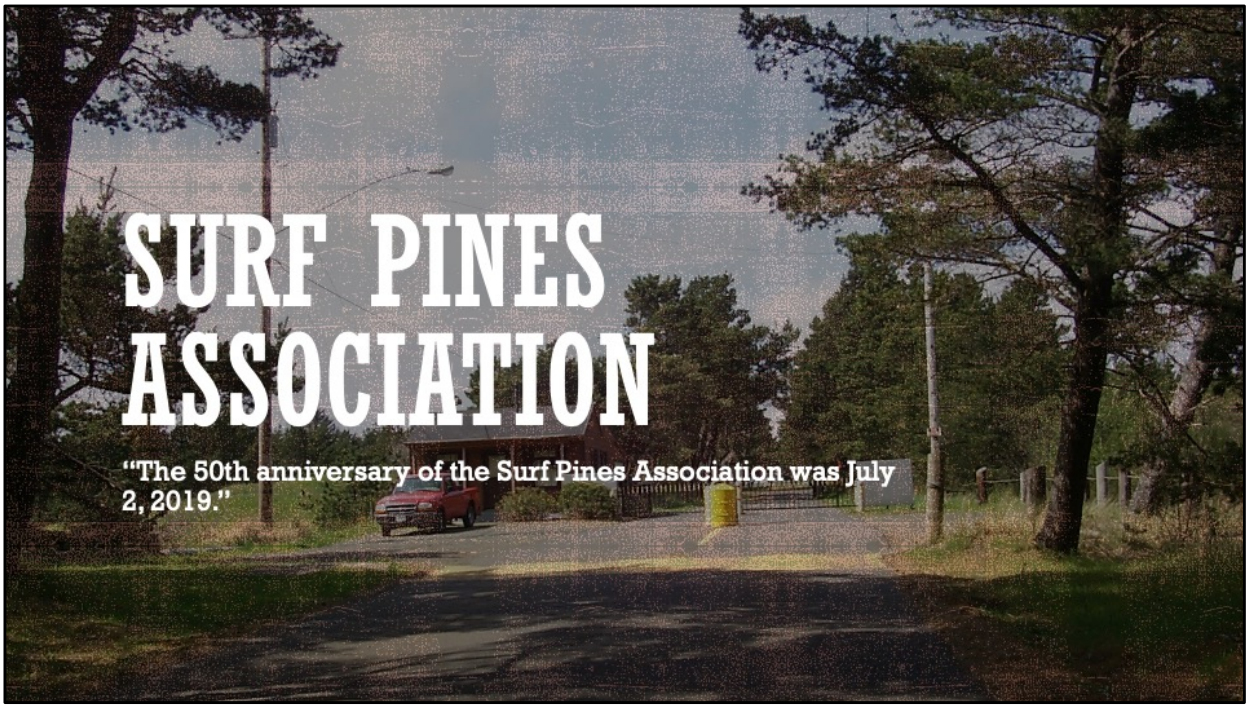
Since we were away from this area for about 5 years, we heard rumors that the house that used to have a blue roof was purchased by another couple. We also had heard that the curse had hit them also and that she died of cancer and he had some major issues.

So again, the home sat empty for several years till one our local insurance brokers and his wife decided to buy the home.


CLATSOP PLAINS
Oregon
Home
Erosion
Maps
Links
Surf Pines
Original
Declaration Land Claims
On the map at right, the Surf Pines neighborhood is outlined in green.
Red outlines show extents of early pioneer land claims made in the Surf Pines area.
These D.L.C. outlines were transferred from an 1855 Metzger map as shown below. Secondary land owners are also noted on that map.
Base map - Google Earth 2019 image
Press arrow at right or left to move to next slide...
Maps for other areas in the County can be found here...
Metzger Maps
CLATSOP PLAINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SURF PINES
"Development of Clatsop Plains has been going on since the mid 19th Century."

So far, the curse has not reared its ugly head. Maybe it is because the current owner is from an old Scandinavian family that has been in this area since the mid 19th century. So maybe he is immune to the bad Ju Ju of the House that used to have a blue roof.

So, what does the story of the house with the Blue Roof have to do with Surf Pines and the Clatsop Plains? Well in answer, it has a lot to do with the history of development of the North Coast of Oregon and Surf Pines. This story is one of many that show how crazy development of the Clatsop Plains has been since the Jewitt, Mitchell and other founding families first settled here on their Donation Land Claims.



Earlier this year, after returning to Surf Pines to retire again, I noticed that the 50th anniversary of the Surf Pines Association was this July 2, 2019. I volunteered to do a presentation for our annual association meeting.

Once I started and being a bit of an amateur historian, I quickly found out that unlike Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside and other areas of the county who have a lot of history, our Clatsop Plains is the wayward offspring that no one seems to love.

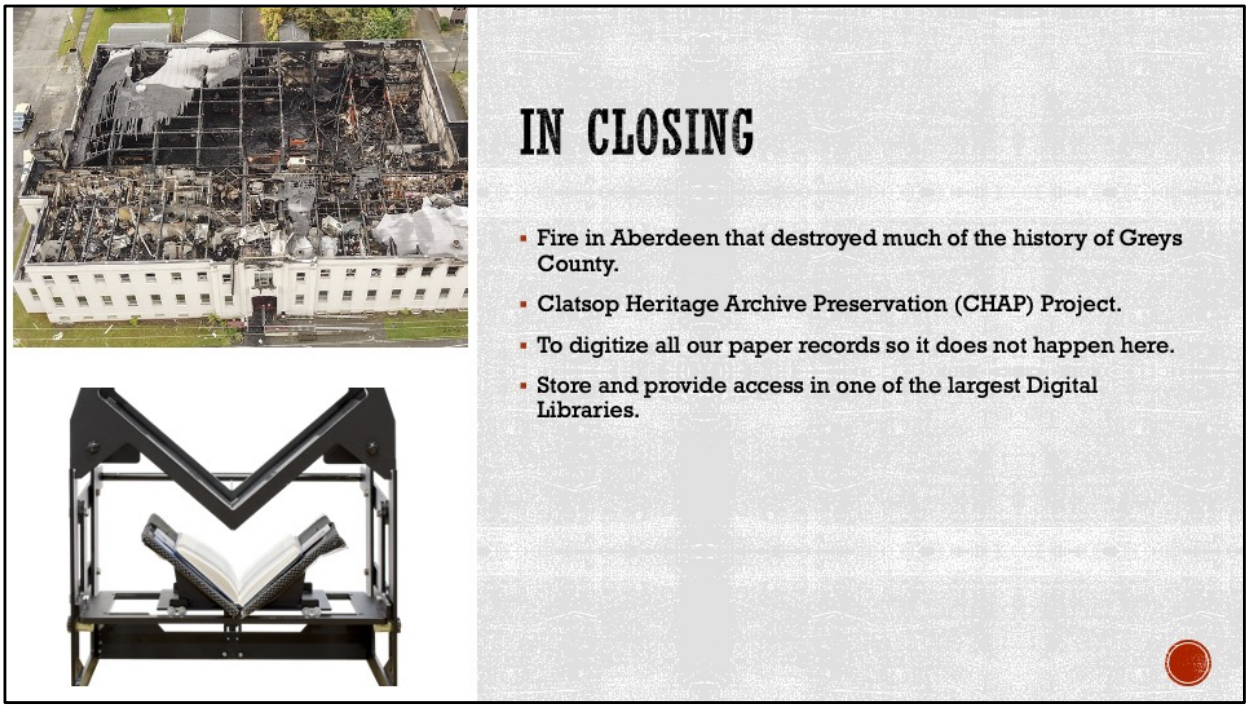
Mac Burns, from CCHS, mentioned that even his archives are woefully short on historical information for the Clatsop plains.

Thus, we began Part one of the Clatsop Plains Chronicles. This Part covers the early days of how Surf Pines was before and after Barney Lucas started buying up the properties in 1944. These encompass Surf Pines, Pinehurst and the other developments on the Clatsop Plains.

After starting to interview some of our long-term neighborhood members like Richie Schroeder, Carol Seppa, Mike Manion, and others, we began researching the Clatsop museums and old records from residents including our own association records. It quickly seemed apparent that this is only the first part of a much-needed story to be told.

Tonight, we will play for you a 30-minute presentation that tells several stories that illustrate the varied history of an area in Clatsop county that has been underserved in its history tale. Please enjoy:

Start Video


IN CLOSING
Fire in Aberdeen that destroyed much of the history of Greys County.
Clatsop Heritage Archive Preservation (CHAP) Project.
To digitize all our paper records so it does not happen here.
Store and provide access in one of the largest Digital Libraries.

I hope you enjoyed part 1 of the Clatsop Plains Chronicles. In closing, I wanted to share with you some exciting and great news regarding your local history here in Clatsop County. About 2 years ago you probably heard about the Aberdeen Armory burning down with much of the history of Greys County going up in flames.

This was a big alarm for CCHS. So, we were able to be a part of an initiative called the CHAP (Clatsop Heritage Archive Preservation) Project. It included a new scanning system tied into our becoming part of the Internet Archive.

LIISA PENNER RESEARCH CENTER & ARCHIVES
INTERNET ARCHIVE PROJECT
Raised over $50,000 over last two years.
Funded purchase and installation of a professional Digitizing system.
Provided funds to hire a Part Time Digital Archiver.
Covers costs of converting scans into searchable PDF documents.
Liisa Penner Research Center & Archives.
Hired Digital Archivist Julie Burpie.

We figured the cost of this would be around $25k. We raised this money through a donation from a Family Trust. It then took most of a year to complete acquisition, installation, training and implementation.

Finally, in late spring of 2019 we started scanning. Although Chelsea our conservator and her small group of volunteers has done an amazing job, it became apparent that we needed help. So, we again applied for donations and raised another $25k+ again this year. This allowed us to hire a part time digital archivist.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

- Volunteer with our scanning and archiving.
- Donate to CHAP through CCHS (tax deductible).
- Help with other organizations who want to digitize their content.

So how can you all help. With several thousands of pages of history stored at all CCHS museums we can use volunteers to help.

Or any donations to CHAP and the Liisa Penner Research Center and Archive would really help. Our goal is to raise at least $50k in the next 12 months to make the Digital Archive position full time.

Lastly CCHS has offered their professional scanning system and Internet Archive availability to all the Museums and Libraries here in Clatsop County at CCHS at their cost. So there may be other opportunities to help with their digitalization.

QUESTIONS
Sunset Beach 1937
A-ORE-35018